

Message Text

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ACTION IO-14

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R 011755Z FEB 78
FM AMEMBASSY PARIS
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 5126
INFO USINT BAGHDAD
AMEMBASSY BELGRADE
AMEMBASSY CAIRO
AMEMBASSY ABU DHABI
AMEMBASSY MUSCAT
AMEMBASSY DOHA
AMEMBASSY TUNIS
USMISSION USUN NEW YORK
USMISSION GENEVA

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NESCO

EO 11652: N/A
TAGS: UNESCO PORG
SUBJECT: UNESCO: MINISTERS OF INFORMATION CONFERENCE IN
BAGHDAD -- THE GULF STATES NEWS AGENCY

1. PERM DEL DISCUSSION WITH UNESCO'S "FREE FLOW OF
INFORMATION" CHIEF, HAMDY KANDIL (EGYPT) ON JAN 31
REVEALED HIS PLANS TO ATTEND GULF STATES MINISTERS OF
INFORMATION CONFERENCE. CONFERENCE WILL BE HELD IN
BAGHDAD DURING WEEK BEGINNING FEBRUARY 4. FOCUS OF
DISCUSSIONS WILL BE THE "GULF NEWS AGENCY" WHICH KANDIL
SAID HAS EXISTED NOW FOR ABOUT ONE YEAR.

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2. PREVIOUS TO HIS ASSIGNMENT TO UNESCO HEADQUARTERS IN
PARIS, KANDIL WAS UNESCO'S REGIONAL REPRESENTATIVE IN
CAIRO, A HAT WHICH HE CONTINUES TO WEAR IN HIS PRESENT
POST. THUS, HE IS THOROUGHLY FAMILIAR WITH THE POLITICS
LEADING TO ESTABLISHING OF THE "GULF NEWS AGENCY," AND
VARIOUS PROGRAMS WHICH IT IS CONSIDERING FOR ADOPTION.
UNESCO EXPERTS HAVE CONTRIBUTED TO THIS UNDERTAKING

THROUGH THE PRESENTATION OF WORKING PAYERS, SOME OF WHICH LAY OUT OPTIONS FOR TRAINING PROGRAMS, HARDWARE, AND CONTENT. AS CURRENTLY ENVISAGED, THE SCHEME SHOULD COST ABOUT 25 MILLION DOLLARS. KANDIL SAID HE HOPES THAT UNESCO WILL BE INVITED TO PARTICIPATE IN THIS EFFORT, AND UNDERTAKE, PERHAPS, THE TRAINING PROGRAM, WHICH COULD BE FINANCED BY A "FUNDS IN TRUST" ARRANGEMENT. THE SCHEME IN ITS ENTIRETY WOULD BE MUCH TOO LARGE A JOB FOR UNESCO ALONE, HOWEVER, LEAVING OPEN THE DOOR FOR COMMERCIAL FIRMS WHICH, ACCORDING TO KANDIL, ARE ALREADY MAKING OFFERS. SO FAR, "COMMERCIAL" ESTIMATES AS TO NEEDS AND COSTS, GO APPARENTLY WELL BEYOND THE SIZE AND VALUE OF THE KINDS OF SCHEMES WHICH WOULD BE BEST SUITED TO THE "GULF NEWS AGENCY." IN RESPONSE DELOFF'S QUESTION AS TO WHAT FIRMS MOST INTERESTED IN GULF STATES' NEWS SERVICE ENTERPRISE, KANDIL RESPONDED THAT THERE IS KEEN COMPETITION AMONG ARABS THEMSELVES, AND THAT SINCE MANY "PUBLIC SERVANTS" OF THAT REGION ARE ALSO PERMITTED TO ENGAGE IN PRIVATE BUSINESS, PRINCIPAL CONTRACTS FOR HARDWARE MIGHT BE DIFFICULT TO OBTAIN FOR AN "OUTSIDER".

3. KANDIL SAID THAT THE (SMALL) GULF STATES THEMSELVES HAD INVITED IRAQ TO PARTICIPATE IN THEIR NEWS AGENCY. FEELERS BY OTHER ARAB LEAGUE STATES, HOWEVER, REPORTEDLY WERE TURNED BACK, THUS SUPPORTING A VIEW THAT OPERATIONS AND GOALS WILL BE KEPT TO MANAGEABLE PROPORTIONS, AND IN LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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SO FAR AS POSSIBLE, REMOVED FROM WIDER AND MUCH MORE DIFFICULT POLITICAL CONSIDERATIONS.

4. UNESCO PERM DEL (AND DEPT) WOULD APPRECIATE WHATEVER INFORMATION MIGHT BE AVAILABLE RELATING TO INFORMATION MINISTERS' CONFERENCE, AND TO THE GULF STATES' NEWS SERVICE, ESPECIALLY AS IT PERTAINS TO RELATIONSHIPS WITH OTHER REGIONAL OR "NON-ALIGNED" NEWS AGENCY COLLECTIVES. TORRES

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